

The Question Box

The Anti-Communists

By Msgr. J. D. Conway

Q. What prompts me to write on this occasion is to ask your opinion concerning the John Birch Society and the "Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation" (of St. Louis, Mo.).

A. You don't really want my personal opinion. It might be profanely forcible, but it would carry no weight. These organizations are called anti-Communist; and I doubt that I would know a Communist if I saw one. To the best of my knowledge I have never seen one except for the members of a Russian Tumbling Team which visited our city a few months ago.

Besides, all the anti-Communist attacks I have read in the last thirty years have given me a very confused picture of a native American Communist. At one time or another every known or suspected brand of liberal has been called Communist. This includes advocates of civil rights and racial equality; friends of foreign aid, federal and social justice; and most labor unions.

Apparently it was once true that our State Department had some Communists in it; so it remains forever suspect. Friends against the Supreme Court warn us that it aids and abets the Communist cause; that its integration decision was based uniquely on the writings of Communist psychologists; and that many of its decisions in favor of human liberties and due process give the green light to subversives. It is alleged that the Court is guided in this direction by those crypto-Commies Warren and Douglas.

Just today I read in some Catholic paper a letter to the editor calling the United Nations a nefarious tool of Communism; and I recall a similar letter a few weeks ago which suspected something must be wrong with the

more calmly than I could—that "Anti-Communism which is not responsible may be as harmful as Communism itself," and can be used by cynical men for purposes that are repugnant to justice." He compared some anti-Communists to "the comical character who shot everyone in town on the theory that this was the only safe way of getting the criminal."

A recent editorial in *The Criterion* (Archdiocese of Indianapolis) gives a conclusive opinion on John Birch. I quote bits:

"During the presidential campaign John Birch members were responsible for some of the most vicious and seditious literature distributed in the state. Surely none of our Catholic readers need be warned against such a society."

"We have examined the program of the John Birch Society. We find it contrary to Catholic social teaching and subversive of American civil liberties. We strenuously warn our readers against this organization."

Similar summation of the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation is given by *America* in its Current Comments of May 6. It writes of pressures, including anonymous telephone calls, used by members of this organization against various responsible Catholic organizations, and points out that "This anti-Red agency, though organized and conducted by Catholics, has no official standing in the Archdiocese of St. Louis." *America* presumes that the founders of this group had the best of intentions: "If so, it beckoned without the hordes of misguided fanatics and unbalanced zealots who need no encouragement to go out looking for Reds."

The most authoritative article I have seen

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